

REMARKS

This Response to Final Office Action, submitted with the enclosed Request for Continued Examination, is filed in response to the Final Office Action dated January 29, 2003. Claims 1 to 6, 13 to 18, 21 to 31 and 33 to 38 have been amended. Claims 7 to 12 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. New Claims 39 to 51 have been added.

A two-month Petition for an Extension of Time to respond to the Office Action is submitted herewith. Checks in the amount of \$750.00 and \$860.00 are submitted herewith to cover the costs of the Request for Continued Examination and the two-month Extension of Time. Please charge Deposit Account No. 02-1818 for any insufficiency or credit for any overpayment.

The Office Action stated that, in considering patentability of claims under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), the Office Action presumed that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made. Applicants hereby confirm that IGT, the assignee of record for the present Application, owned the subject matter of the various claims at the time the inventions covered therein were made.

The Office Action rejected Claims 1 to 6 and 13 to 40 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,089,976 to Schneider ("Schneider") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,290,600 to Glasson ("Glasson").

Schneider discloses a gaming device including a plurality of choices displayed by a display device. The Schneider gaming device enables the player to select the choices

until two matching bonus amounts are revealed, at which point the game ends and the player receives the matching bonus amount.

Glasson discloses a plurality of reels, a bonus symbol on one reel, and one or more landing symbols or lily pad symbols, among other symbols. The bonus symbol includes a feature symbol or frog. When the bonus symbol is generated on the first reel and a lily pad symbol is generated on an adjacent reel, the feature symbol or frog leaves the bonus symbol jumps to one or more of the lily pad symbols on adjacent reels. The player receives an award based on the number of lily pad symbols moved to by the frog. The awards are not associated with specific frog symbols and the lily pad symbols. Glasson's frog symbol and lily pad symbols are not selectable by the player. Accordingly, Glasson does not enable the player to affect the award by selecting a particular frog symbol or lily pad symbol.

Applicants have clarified certain claims including Claims 1 to 6, 13 to 18, 21 to 31 and 33 to 38 relating to an image of one reel symbol while on one of the locations or at one of the positions on the reels and another reel symbol while on another one of the locations or at another one of the positions on the reels. The frog symbol of Glasson does not interact with the lily pad symbols while the frog is on or at the position of the frog symbol. Applicants respectfully submit that the claimed combination defined by the amended claims is for at least this reason patentably distinguished over the combination of Schneider in view of Glasson.

Figs. 5C and 5F provide one illustration of the image extending from one reel symbol to another. In the example illustrated in Fig. 5C, the interaction 82 includes an image constructed of (from right to left): (a) the firefighter symbol holding a water hose

on one reel; (b) a portion of the water stream on an adjacent reel; and (c) the end of the water stream on a third adjacent reel which has reached a character symbol on that third reel. In the example illustrated in Fig. 5F, the interaction 82 includes an image constructed of (from left to right): (a) a character A on a reel; (b) a character B on an adjacent reel; and (c) character A's arm and hand grasping character B on the adjacent reel.

Schneider does not disclose, teach or suggest interacting reel symbols, and in Glasson, the frog moves from its original reel location to a different reel location. Unlike the combination of Glasson and Schneider, in one embodiment of the present invention, the display provides the interaction between the reel symbols at their locations on the reels where they undergo a graphical change to provide the image of the reel symbols interacting with one another. This is substantially different than Glasson where the frog part of the symbol lands on the lily pad symbol but does not accomplish the same interaction between symbols as in the claimed invention. Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is patentably distinguished over Schneider in view of Glasson.

New Claims 44 to 46 define a gaming device having a combination of elements including a display of a first image from a first interacting symbol on a first location on a first reel interacting with a second image from a second interacting symbol on a second location on a second reel. Schneider and Glasson do not, individually or collectively, disclose, teach or suggest such a gaming device displaying such symbol interaction.

New Claims 47 to 51 define a gaming device having a combination of elements including a display of a first image from a first interacting symbol on a first reel interacting with a second image from a second interacting symbol on a second reel.

The first image extends from the first interacting symbol to the second interacting symbol. Schneider and Glasson do not, individually or collectively, disclose, teach or suggest such a gaming device.

An earnest endeavor has been made to place this application in condition for formal allowance and is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Response, the applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner contact the applicant's attorney, Adam Masia, at (312) 807-4284 to discuss this Response.

Respectfully submitted,

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BY

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